

Dr. Goldberg Introduces Photodynamic Therapy (PDT): A Turnkey Approach To Anti-Aging

Q: Dr. Goldberg, What is PDT?

A: PhotoDynamic Therapy (or PDT) is an approach for treating aging and sun-damaged skin. It is emerging as a powerful new tool to enhance the results of non-ablative laser and/or light therapy. This approach consists of various laser and light sources that are used to activate a light-sensitizing solution. The combination can be used to treat a number of skin indications such as scaly lesions, blotchiness and enlarged pores.

Q: Why is PDT so beneficial?

A: The primary advantage of utilizing PhotoDynamic Therapy is greater improvement in skin rejuvenation plus the combined benefits of controlling acne, clearing pre-cancerous skin changes such as actinic keratoses (AKs) and possibly lessening the incidence of skin cancer all in one procedure. Patients who have undergone treatment have been thrilled with the clinical 'boost' they receive with the addition of PDT to their non-ablative laser or light treatment because of the minimal downtime, safety and its ability to treat a large area. Another inherent bonus for my patients is that using PDT as an adjunct to laser/light therapy often means that fewer treatment sessions may be necessary in order to achieve the desired cosmetic results. We have also been investigating the clinical benefits of PDT and light therapy for conditions such as inflammatory acne and rosacea.

Q: How does it work?

A: PDT, in combination with laser/light treatments, was discovered by dermatologic surgeons who observed its cosmetic effects on the skin's appearance while treating patients for actinic keratoses and chronic chapped lips: two pre-cancerous skin conditions associated with chronic exposure to sunlight. For nearly five million Americans, years of overexposure to the sun's powerful rays leave behind actinic keratoses (AKs), the thick, scaly patches on the skin that sometimes progress to dangerous skin cancers. Despite warnings by dermatologic surgeons to carefully monitor and remove AKs, many people ignore these potentially pre-cancerous lesions because they dread the treatment process itself. PDT is gaining popularity among dermatologists and patients alike as a promising alternative to cryosurgery (freezing with liquid nitrogen) and topical chemotherapy. PDT works by applying a light-sensitizing solution to the effected area of the skin prior to delivery of light treatment. Though still in early stages of use, this modality appears to enhance cosmetic rejuvenation by drastically improving skin tone, skin texture and pore size - in a significantly reduced amount of time.

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